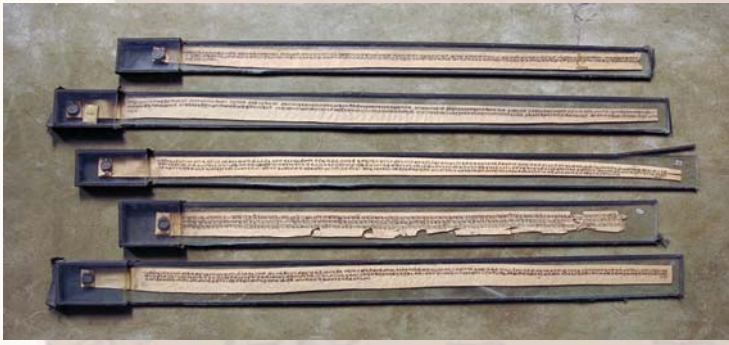


Searching for the Lost Manuscripts

Indian Cultural Missions in Tibet



Ancient palm leaves brought back to India by Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan



The members of the 1938 Expedition to Tibet

Fascinating expeditions were undertaken to Tibet by Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan. He travelled to the Roof of the World four times and brought back a number of original Sanskrit manuscripts. Most of these palm-leaf texts originally belonged to the libraries of Vikramashila and Nalanda universities; they had been kept for centuries in isolated monasteries such as Shalu, Reting or Sakya.

For Rahul, historical research was part of his political path; he believed that Indian history was a key to India's independence struggle.



Rahul and Gedun in Tibet



Gedun Choepel at Sakya



Scholar Gedun Choepel in front of the entrance of the Sakya Monastery

In 1938 and 1934, the Great Pandit was accompanied by Gedun Choepel, the famous Tibetan scholar, who later traveled to India to learn Sanskrit and rediscover the true source of Tibetan knowledge.

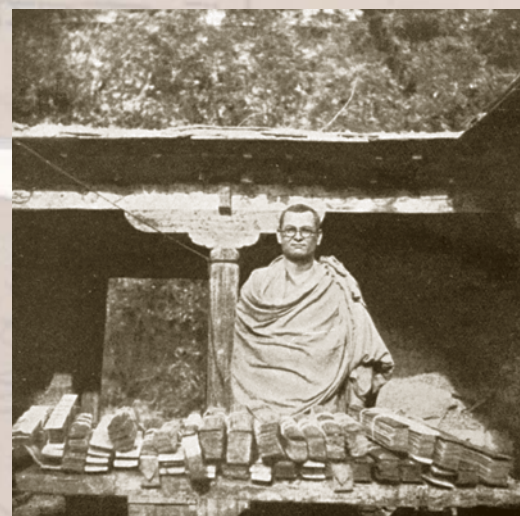


Gedun Choepel was imprisoned, probably on British 'recommendation'

While in Tibet, Gedun Chopel was Rahul's translator and guide; the manuscripts collected by the two are today preserved in Patna museum. Both Rahul and Gedun were later imprisoned for their independent thinking and their feeling for the ordinary folks; this was not well seen by the British establishment.



Recent picture of Shalu Monastery where old palm leaves were found



Pandit Rahul Sankrityayan in Sakya Monastery with sanskrit palm leaves